

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAIGON 01474 01 OF 02 061420Z

53

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 AID-05 OMB-01 ACDA-05 IO-10 NEA-09 /079 W

----- 053834

R 061200Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2583

INFO AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

CINCPAC

USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 1474

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

DEPT PASS IMMEDIATE TO IBS/NCA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT VS

SUBJECT: GVN-HOA HAO CONFLICT

REF: A. STATE 024908; B. SAIGON 15877

1. SUMMARY: AFTER SOME DELAY THE GVN HAS MOVED TO ASSERT ITS
AUTHORITY IN THE FACE OF INCREASING ATTEMPTS BY HOA HAO
MILITANTS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF CONTINUING COMMUNIST ATTACKS
TO ESTABLISH GREATER MILITARY AUTONOMY IN THEIR AREAS.
ACTING UNDER GOVT ORDERS, POLICE HAVE RECENTLY CONDUCTED
WIDESPREAD ARRESTS OF HOA HAO CIVIL GUARD (BAO AN) LEADERS
ALONG WITH SOME 600 FOLLOWERS AND CONFISCATED 184 WEAPONS.
SO FAR CONGEN CAN THO REPORTS ONLY THREE BAO AN KILLED. DEPRIVED
OF MANY OF THEIR LEADERS, BAO AN CONFUSED AND INDECISIVE.
REACTION GENERALLY LIMITED TO TEMPORARY ROAD BLOCKS AND SIMILAR
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAIGON 01474 01 OF 02 061420Z

DEMONSTRATIONS INCREASINGLY MADE UP MOSTLY OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

WHICH HAVE DISPERSED WHEN CONFRONTED BY POLICE.

2. MOST BAO AN IN OUTLYING PROVINCES HAVE EITHER DISBANDED OR RALLIED TO CHAU DOC AND AN GIANG WHERE THEY ARE GATHERED IN LARGE GROUPS AROUND THEIR PAGODAS AND OFFICES. GVN ADOPTING A POSTURE OF WATCHFUL WAITING AND HAS NOT ATTEMPTED ANY MORE ARRESTS IN PAST FOUR DAYS. BAO AN LEADERSHIP SIMILARLY SEEKING TO AVOID MILITARY CLASHES THEY CAN ONLY LOSE. INDICATIONS ARE HOA HAO FACTION OF LUONG TRONG TUONG WHICH PREDOMINATES IN BAO AN LOOKING FOR POLITICAL SOLUTION WITH GVN. THIS SHOULD BE POSSIBLE NOW THAT FORMERLY INTRANSIGENT TUONG SEES WHO HAS THE CLOUT. IN THE PROCESS HOA HAO WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO GIVE UP MOST OF THEIR EARLIER DEMANDS FOR INCREASED MILITARY AUTONOMY. END SUMMARY.

3. ON JAN 29 MR-4 NATIONAL POLICE COMMANDER COL NHAN VAN THIET ARRESTED HOA HAO CIVIL GUARD (BAO AN) COMMANDER TRAN HUU BAY (AKA HAI TAP) AND SEVERAL OF HIS STAFF AT THE END OF A MTG IN LONG XUYEN DURING WHICH THE HOA HAO LEADERS REPORTEDLY REFUSED TO DISBAND THE BAO AN AND HAND IN THEIR WEAPONS. THIS WAS THE FIRST STEP IN A GVN CRACKDOWN TO BRING THE INCREASINGLY INDEPENDENT HOA HAO FORCES UNDER CONTROL.

4. WIDESPREAD SUBSEQUENT ARRESTS OF BAO AN LEADERSHIP THROUGHOUT HOA HAO AREAS APPEAR TO HAVE LEFT RANK AND FILE CONFUSED AND INDECISIVE. INITIAL REPORTS INDICATE OVER 600 BAO AN ARRESTED SO FAR AND 184 WEAPONS CONFISCATED PRIMARILY IN THE FIVE HEAVILY HOA HAO PROVINCES OF KIEN PHONE, CHAU DOC, SA DEC, VINH LONG AND AN GIANG. CONTRARY TO PRESS REPORTS OF HEAVY HOA HAO CASUALTIES, US SOURCES INDICATE ONLY THREE BAO AN KILLED SO FAR. HOA HAO REACTION GENERALLY LIMITED TO TEMPORARY ROAD BLOCS, CLOSING OFF MARKETS AND SIMILAR DEMONSTRATIONS INCREASINGLY MADE UP MOSTLY OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN. THESE HAVE BACKED DOWN AND LEFT WHEN CONFRONTED BY POLICE.

5. AFTER INITIAL CRACKDOWN, MOST OF BAO AN IN OUTLYING PROVINCES OF SA DEC, KIEN PHONG AND VINH LONG HAVE EITHER DISBANDED OR RALLIED TO CHAU DOC AND AN GIANG WHERE THEY ARE GATHERED IN LARGE GROUPS (100-600) AROUND THEIR PAGODAS AND LOCAL OFFICES. ALTHOUGH MANY IN THESE GROUPS ARE NOT ARMED, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SAIGON 01474 01 OF 02 061420Z

POLICE REALIZE FURTHER ACTION COULD CAUSE SERIOUS BLOODSHED AND HAVE REFRAINED FROM MAKING ANY ARRESTS IN THE PAST FOUR DAYS. REMAINING BAO AN LEADERSHIP HOLED UP AT TAY AN PAGODA IN LONG XUYEN ALONG WITH 600 BAO AN, SOME 200 OF WHICH ARE ARMED.

6. THE HOA HAO RELIGIOUS FACTION OF LUONG TRONG TUONG HAS BEEN TAKING ADVANTAGE OF HEIGHTENED COMMUNIST ATTACKS TO PRESS FOR GREATER HOA HAO AUTONOMY IN MILITARY SPHERE SINCE EARLY 1974.

(REF SAIGON 15877) EXTENSIVE AND REPEATED GVN ATTEMPTS TO REACH A COMPROMISE OVER PAST YEAR HAVE FOUNDERED ON TUONG'S INSISTENCE THAT HOA HAO UNITS SERVE ONLY IN HOA HAO AREAS AND THAT SURPLUS HOA HAO YOUTHS BE GIVEN DRAFT DEFERMENTS AS "MONKS".

7. MORE IMMEDIATELY, GVN DRAFT PROGRAM IN HOA HAO AREAS THROUGHOUT JANUARY REPORTEDLY STYMIED BY BAO AN WHO "RESCUED" POTENTIAL DRAFTES AND EVEN RECRUITED PF INTO THEIR OWN RANKS. THE OFFICIAL MOI ORDER DISBANDING THE BAO AN (JAN 30) CITES THEM FOR RESPONSIBILITY IN TWELVE ANTI-GOVT DEMONSTRATIONS, FIVE OUTPOST SEIGES AND OTHER ACTS UNDERCUTTING GOVT AUTHORITY DURING LAST FOUR MONTHS.

8. COMMENT: PRESS HAS RECENTLY REFERRED TO DISSIDENT BUDDHIST ACTIVITY IN BLOCKING ROADS IN DELTA AND HAS OTHERWISE TREATED BAO AN PROBLEM IN TERMS OF ANTI-GOVT OPPOSITION ACTIVITY. THE PROBLEM OF THE HOA HAO/CIVIL GUARD AND HOA HAO TENDENCIES TO ESTABLISH AN INDEPENDENT MILITARY CAPABILITY HAVE LONG BEEN A PART OF VIETNAMESE SCENE AND WAS ONE OF FIRST PROBLEMS FACING PRES DIEM. THOUGH FAIRLY WELL IN CHECK, THIS TENDENCY HAS SURFACED REPEATEDLY OVER YEARS IN VARIOUS HOA HAO REQUESTS FOR SEPARATE HOA HAO-OFFICERED MILITARY UNITS, FOR GVN MANDATE TO HOA HAO TO PACIFY VARIOUS AREAS (I.E. PART OF KIEN GIANG PROVINCE) IN RETURN FOR TITLE THERETO, AND MOST RECENTLY FOR INCREASING NUMBERS OF DRAFT DEFERMENTS AND PERMISSION TO GREATLY EXPAND THE BAO AN. DISAGREEMENT WITH THE GVN ON THIS ISSUE, HOWEVER, HAS NOT AFFECTED THE STRONG ANTI-COMMUNIST STANCE OF THE HOA HAO, NOR CAN IT BE EQUATED WITH THE SORT OF ANTI-GOVT ACTIVITY WHICH HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT BY THE RADICAL OPPOSITION IN RECENT MONTHS.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAIGON 01474 02 OF 02 061412Z

53

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 AID-05 OMB-01 ACDA-05 IO-10 NEA-09 /079 W

----- 053712

R 061200Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2584
INFO AMCONSUL BIEN HOA
AMCONSUL CAN THO
AMCONSUL DANANG
AMCONSUL NHA TRANG
CINPAC HONOLU LU HI
USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 1474

CINCPAC FOR POLAD
DEPT PASS IMMEDIATE TO IBS/NCA

9. LACKING GVN'S AGREEMENT TO THESE PROPOSALS AND NOTICING GVN WAS PREOCCUPIED ELSEWHERE WITH RISING SCALE COMMUNIST ATTACKS AND GROWING ACTIVITY BY RADICAL POLITICAL OPPOSITION IN SAIGON, HOA HAO SIMPLY BEGAN TO IMPLEMENT ITS PROPOSALS INFORMALLY. STAGE FINALLY REACHED, HOWEVER, IN WHICH INTERFERENCE WITH NATIONAL POLICE CREATED ULTIMATELY INTOLERABLE SITUATION FOR GOVT.

10. FACTORS WHICH MAY HAVE ENTERED INTO THE GVN'S DECISION TO MOVE AT THIS TIME INCLUDE: (1) THE PRESSING NEED TO TAP EVERY MANPOWER SOURCE FOR DEFENSE PURPOSES IN THE FACE OF THE CONTINUING COMMUNIST OFFENSIVE; (2) THE NEED TO STOP THE EROSION OF GVN AUTHORITY IN HOA HAO AREAS NOW BEFORE THE BAO AN COULD EFFECTIVELY ASSERT THEIR CLAIM FOR MILITARY AUTONOMY BY FORCE OF ARMS; AND (3) CONCERN THAT A STRONG, INDEPENDENT BAO AN MIGHT TEMPT SOME HOA HAO LEADERS TO TRY TO EMULATE CAO DAI LEADERS IN POSING AS INDEPENDENT OF BOTH
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAIGON 01474 02 OF 02 061412Z

COMMUNISTS AND GOVT. THUS, GVN-HOA HAO IMPASSE WAS APPROACHING A CRISIS POINT BEYOND WHICH FURTHER DELAY IN GVN ACTION COULD ONLY MAKE THE ULTIMATE SHOWDOWN MORE DANGEROUS.

11. EARLIER RELIABLE REPORTS SUGGESTED GVN WOULD NOT INSIST ON ACTUALLY DISBANDING AND DISARMING OF BAO AN, BUT RATHER WOULD SETTLE FOR PRO FORMA INTEGRATION INTO PSDF UNDER AT LEAST NOMINAL GVN CONTROL. WHATEVER PREVIOUS GVN ATTITUDE, THEY HAVE NOW TAKEN MUCH MORE OPEN AND DEFINITIVE STEP. AS HOA HAO SEN LE PHUOC SANG NOTED TO US, "IT HAS BECOME A MATTER OF FACE FOR BOTH THE GVN AND THE HOA HAO."

12. NEVERTHELESS, IT APPEARS AT PRESENT THAT NEITHER SIDE WISHES TO PRECIPITATE MAJOR ARMED CLASHES. GVN POLICE HAVE NOT AS YET ATTEMPTED TO CONFRONT OR ARREST ANY LARGE, WELL-ARMED GROUPS OF BAO AN, NOR HAS THE BAO AN TAKEN ANY SERIOUS AGGRESSIVE ACTION AGAINST ARVN OR POLICE UNITS. SO FAR THE GVN HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL WITHOUT MAJOR BLOODSHED. TUONG APPEARS TO

BY TRYING TO AVOID MILITARY CONFRONTATIONS WHICH THE BAO AN
CAN ONLY LOSE. INSTEAD, REPORTEDLY HE HOPES TO WORK OUT A
POLITICAL SOLUTION WITH THE GVN THROUGH THE OFFICES OF ELECTED
HOA HAO DEPUTIES AND SENATORS. THIS SHOULD NOT PROVE IMPOSSIBLE
NOW THAT TUONG HAS SEEN WHO HAS THE CLOUT AND IS PROBABLY MORE
OPEN TO COMPROMISE. END COMMENT.

13. FEB 6 GVN SPOKESMAN RELEASED TO PRESS STATEMENT GIVING
DETAILS OF AFFAIR (REPORTED SEFTEL).
LEHMANN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COMBAT OPERATIONS, COMBAT CASUALTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SAIGON01474
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750043-1147
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750266/aaaachkj.tel
Line Count: 233
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 024908, 75 SAIGON 15877
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 MAY 2003 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <15 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GVN-HOA HAO CONFLICT
TAGS: PINS, PINT, VS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006